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SCIENCE

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LEGISLATION RELATING TO STANDARDS.*

ONE of the first official acts of the National Academy of Sciences, in the capacity of scientific adviser of the government, was the appointment, at the request of the Secretary of the Treasury, in 1863, the year in which the Academy received its charter, of a Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures, which has continued to be a standing committee of the Academy. The report of this committee in 1866 was one of the effective forces in securing the passage of the most important, and, until recently, the only act of Congress constituting general legislation on the subject of weights and measures. In view of these facts, and on account of the remarkable progress towards unification of standards which has been made during the past few years, affecting in one way or another the whole civilized world, and especially in view of very recent activity and interest in this country, it seems proper to invite the attention of the Academy to a brief resumé of National legislation relating to weights and measures, from the founding of the National Government to the present moment. The task is rendered comparatively easy from the fact, for which metrologists can hardly be too thankful, that such legislation is extremely meager. It is a cause for sincere congratulation that in this respect, at least,

* Presented to the National Academy of Sciences at its April meeting.

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